

## SPOKANE BRANCH OFFICE

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### **Fourteen Inland Northwest Small Business Owners Graduate from SBA Emerging Leaders Spokane Class**

***Seven-month program provides growth framework for up-and-coming  
Inland Northwest Businesses***

SPOKANE, Wash. – Fourteen small business owners from the Inland Northwest graduated Oct. 22 from U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Emerging Leaders, a “mini-MBA” training initiative for local businesses on the brink of growth.

This is the fourth year the SBA Spokane Branch Office provided the seven-month executive education series.

The program includes approximately 100 hours of classroom time, connects small business owners with a network of industry experts and peers, and supports the creation of a three-year strategic growth action plan.

“For every \$200 the SBA invests in Emerging Leaders, a new job is created,” SBA Pacific Northwest Regional Administrator Jeremy Field said. “Many entrepreneurs have a clear vision of where they want to take their business but often get stuck on how to get there. The SBA Emerging Leaders initiative proves a few tools and a strong support network can empower entrepreneurs to take their business to incredible heights.”

Since the SBA started offering the Emerging Leaders initiative in various locations across the country, graduates have created thousands of new full-time jobs, accessed millions of dollars in new financing, and secured federal, state, local and tribal contracts worth more than \$1 billion. Plus, more than two-thirds of graduating businesses increase their annual revenues.

The 2019 graduates from the Spokane class span the entire Inland Northwest including as far away as Riggins, Idaho with owners truly representing all four corners of the 30-county territory. The businesses represent a wide variety of industries including restaurants, technology, fitness and contracting.

For example, Cindy Carlson, owner and operator of Salmon River Helicopters—with husband Guy Carlson—specializes in helicopter lift services for the powerline and firefighting industries. She started

the SBA Emerging Leaders Spokane class in April with the challenges of improving efficiency, continued growth and facilitating an environment to create a team of leaders and employees to enable them to attract a solid workforce to their family-owned operation. Her plan includes continued education and training for key employees, ensuring a full understanding of the vision and mission of their company, and improvement of their marketing program so it is efficient and reaches the right audiences. Since this is a very high overhead business with a high cost of equipment, financial efficiency was also on her final growth plan agenda.

Across all business types in this year's class two common themes emerged regardless of business type. First, the ability to delegate effectively to enable growth of employees, the owner and the business itself and second, how to hire and keep millennial and Gen Z employees by giving them meaningful employment.

The following are the 2019 SBA Emerging Leaders Seattle class graduates:

**Spokane, WA**

- Ashlie Beal – The Light Factory
- Monika Cetnarowski – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sight Bioscience
- James Courtner – Courtner Architectural Group
- Harlan Heise – Heise Electrical
- Jaunessa Walsh – Farmgirl Fit

**Spokane Valley, WA**

- Frank Duffy – CW Crates and Pallets
- Gary Owens – Skyone Aerospace
- Steve Simms – Cascade Defense

**Kettle Falls, WA**

- Steve Hedrick – Northern Ales, Inc.

**Richland, WA**

- Jason Merrick – Talos Engineering

**Walla Walla, WA**

- Shawn McCrery – Tektoniks Corporation

**East Wenatchee, WA**

- Corey Rowe – Rowe's Tractor

**Post Falls, ID**

- Nikki Randolph – Lake City Restaurants

**Riggins, ID**

- Cindy Carlson – Salmon River Helicopters

For more information about the Emerging Leaders initiative – including applying for the 2020 class – visit [www.sba.gov/EmergingLeaders](http://www.sba.gov/EmergingLeaders).

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**About the U.S. Small Business Administration**

The U.S. Small Business Administration makes the American dream of business ownership a reality. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow or expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster.

It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov). The **Seattle District Office** serves Washington and northern Idaho with office locations in Seattle and Spokane.